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# Dedication of the Bangor - Brewer Toll Bridge

WLBZ Radio

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**University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department**

Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Dedication of new Bangor-Brewer Toll Bridge

Date: November 11, 1954

Recording number: T.3

Length of recording: 31:50

[transcript begins]

Announcer: We are broadcasting now from the Brewer end of this very impressive two and a half million-dollar bridge. This is the point where the dedication ceremonies will begin in a very short time. Governor Burton M. Cross will give the main address and then cut the ribbon, which has been strung across the new Bangor-Brewer Bridge. Civic leaders of the neighboring cities will also take part in the ceremonies along with other distinguished persons on hand for this important event. Following the dedication ceremonies, the speakers and other officials will cross the new bridge. They will be followed by the annual Veterans Day parade and thus the dedication ceremonies will be rounded out in a very colorful manner. As you might well imagine there is an air of excitement here as things are about set to get underway. The governor has just arrived, all the various dignitaries are set to step into their places and the actual dedication ceremonies will take place at any moment. We have a complete program here, souvenir programs are being passed out and we will follow that along as the broadcast moves forward. This broadcast being presented by the Merchants National Bank and the opening of the new Bangor-Brewer Bridge makes banking at Merchants National Banks new drive-in walk-in office in Brewer more convenient than ever. Located practically at the end of the new bridge surrounded by ample free parking space its ideal for people who wish to do their banking quickly as well as for those who prefer to take time to discuss their banking needs. For busy people the drive-in window is ideal. Just drive up and transact your business without even leaving your car. It's the new easy way to bank, quick and convenient. If you would prefer to walk into the bank lobby to do your banking you'll find plenty of free parking space and merchants on parking lot. Whichever you prefer the drive-in or walk in you'll find that Merchants new Brewer office is a complete bank providing every banking service. Just try banking at Merchants new Brewer office for convenience, for friendly service....We still are not quite set to get underway here as far as the official dedication ceremonies are concerned. Eddie Owen is with me here at the Brewer end of this new Bangor-Brewer Bridge. Eddie will be carrying on along with the broadcast, ah let's, eh try out your mike Eddie you might comment on the fine weather we are enjoying here and see if the mike works.

Eddie: That's an excellent idea and we are enjoying fine weather. Very fortunate that on this auspicious occasion for Bangor and Brewer that the weather is so excellent. Tremendous number of people have shown up here to take observance of this dedication. The reviewing stand is being well filled up now, as the various dignitaries that will take part in the ceremonies are in their seats. People still streaming across the bridge from the Bangor end, and I can see beyond the reviewing stand the parade line and

the parade that will follow afterwards. There is Norbert X. Dowd, secretary of the chamber of commerce in Bangor giving a warning to the others on the stand that things will be starting very soon.

Norbert: Ladies and gentlemen!

Eddie: And here is Norbert X. Dowd.

Norbert: Testing...Testing

Eddie: No he is just testing apparently.. All are in a flurry of those last minute checks and we find out that the public address system is....

Norbert: [speaking behind Eddie briefly] Testing...There we are, ladies and gentlemen may I extend this sincere welcome to you at the dedication of this bridge. We will opening...open the ceremonies the National Anthem placed by the 195<sup>th</sup> band under the direction of [Warrant Officer Net Diamond]

[National Anthem plays]

Norbert: The invocation by the Rev. E Charles Dartnell of the Methodist church of Brewer.

Rev. Charles: Let us pray. Our heavenly father this is the day when a wreath will be placed on the tomb of an unknown soldier in Arlington but we dedicate a bridge. This is the day when throughout the length and breadth of our land much will be said about war and the effects of war but we dedicate a bridge. Today one of the leading lights of our government will talk about the effects of the atom and its destructiveness but we dedicate a bridge. How wonderful it is O god that when man uses his skill and ingenuity and the resources which thou hast provided to build wonderful things for his fellow man. We thank thee for this and grant O god that soon the nations of the world may learn how to build a bridge. A bridge of friendship and understanding across which the traffic of goodwill may ever flow in ever-increasing volume. Let this come to pass O god in the name of the father and the son and the Holy Ghost. Amen!

[mumbling about sitting]

Voice over public address system: Ok [Net].. If you'd make a little room for the band to go back down through there now we'd appreciate it. Just a moment.

[drum beat accompanied by voices from the crowd]

Announcer: Momentary lull while the 195<sup>th</sup> Army Band Maine National Guard moves back and the ceremonies will soon get underway again with Norbert X. Dowd the executive secretary of the Bangor chamber of commerce...

Norbert: Ladies and gentlemen we have a number of distinguished guests here on the platform that we would like to present to you. First and foremost of course is the very gracious first lady of the state of Maine Mrs. Burton M. Cross. On behalf of the committee for the dedication ceremonies and with the approval and say yes of the governor it is a pleasure to pin a corsage on Mrs. Cross's coat.

Mrs. Cross: May I say something... I think this is a very wonderful occasion and it's just one more step forward in our parade of progress. Thankyou.

Norbert: Thank you Mrs. Cross. Representing the state highway commission is Mr. Clarence S. Crosby a member of that commission. Mr. David Stevens the chairman because of a prior commitment was unable to be here but he has sent an able substitute in Mr. Clarence Crosby. The chief marshal of the parade that will follow the dedication ceremonies here, Major General Norman E. Whitney. A gentlemen who came all the way from Kansas City Missouri to be here today for this dedication. The partner in the firm Harrington and Cortelyou, the engineers of the bridge, the consulting engineers Mr. E.M. Newman. We know that he is going to enjoy the Maine air while he is here. His right hand man in the construction of the bridge and overseeing the operation Mr. [Zint] Wyatt Jr. the resident engineer representing the firm Harrington and Cortelyou. The fellow who [spacked?] the program that you are about to witness, the chairman of the dedication committee Mr. James A. Hughes. I'm very sorry but I should have introduced the lady previous to this but I'm sure she will understand Mrs. Clarence S. Crosby. The president of the Bangor chamber of commerce the organization that originally began the study to make this bridge possible Mr. Stanley Jaylene Jr. Mr. Athol Littlefield commander of the James W. Williams post of the American Legion. Bangor and Brewer have always worked together and cooperated in every endeavor and it is fitting that on this Brewer side of the bridge with these dedication exercises this morning that the greeting of the city of Brewer should be extended to you by the very gracious mayor Mrs. Doris L. Beatham.

Beatham: Governor Cross, Mrs. Cross, all other state dignitaries, Arnold Veague Chairmen of the Bangor city council and all others who are joining in this wonderful celebration this morning. And to each and every person who has come here to witness the dedication of the Bangor and Brewer Bridge I welcome you. As mayor of the city of Brewer in behalf of my city council, my city manager and each and every citizen of the city of Brewer, we do hope that you will find within our city a very friendly and sincere welcome. We who are now joined doubly with our twin city of Bangor have much to be grateful for to our state for joining us together once again. And although the space between Bangor and Brewer may be very small the accomplishments which we can do as we work together and for each other are wonderful and numerous. How fitting it is that, the dedication of this wonderful bridge should take place on the day in which we commemorate Veteran's Day. For all those veterans who gave so much and asked so little, do have a wonderful day with us! And no matter where you came from or where you are going may you find a sincere, a friendly, and a gracious welcome from the city of Brewer. I welcome you!

Norbert: Thank you mayor Beatham. I owe an apology to a gentlemen on the platform a gentlemen who was here this morning at six o'clock with a crew of men to prepare this platform and you can easily see

the terrific job they did with it, Mr. Charles Pooler chairman of the Brewer industrial development committee. Charlie I'm sorry! Bangor is on the other side of the bridge but the mayor of Bangor is with us here this morning and it is his desire to extend the greetings of the queen's city to you people. It is a privilege to present Arnold Veague Mayor of Bangor.

Veague: Governor and Mrs. Cross, Mayor Beatham, distinguished guests and friends, as chairmen of the Bangor city council it is my privilege to extend to all the official greetings of the city of Bangor. This is an occasion to which we have long looked forward. It marks an important milestone in the history of two great communities and the state. For many years Bangor and Brewer have served Eastern Maine and each other in a spirit of cooperation and understanding. We are now under a double time to our neighboring city and I know we can look forward to a prolonged period of progress, growth, and cooperation previously hindered by a lack of communication facilities. This new structure will be of tremendous value to our friends of Eastern Maine and should solve a traffic problem which has given us all deep concern. On behalf of the city of Bangor, I also wish to extend out thanks to the administration, which has made this event possible and to Mr. Loran Thompson and Senator Woodcock and the other members of the state delegation who have so vigorously and whole-heartedly presented this project to the Maine legislature, thank you.

Norbert: Thank you Mayor Veague. Another gentlemen that I would like to introduce to you one of those perennial young fellows the immediate past president of the Three Quarter Century Club of Maine a lifelong resident of Bangor Mr. John Packer. The visible foundation of this bridge can be seen in the pillars that support it. The invisible foundation was laid in Augusta in 1949 when that old but ever young leading citizen of Brewer was serving as a state representative and introduced to the legislature a resolve asking for a study to be made by the highway commission in the need for a further link between Bangor and Brewer. It is a great pleasure and I know a very happy occasion for me to present to you Mr. Loran H. Thompson former state representative.

Thompson: [Quietly at first] Governor Cross, Mrs. Cross [mumbling indistinctly] Governor Cross and fellow citizens of Maine. I am very highly honored to be President of the dedication of this new beautiful bridge. This bridge is made possible by the citizens and businessmen of Bangor and Brewer working together as a team. Senator Woodcock and myself have the honor to present the necessary bill to the ways and bridge committee now known as the highway commission, which was passed without any opposition by the 94<sup>th</sup> legislature. This very historical spot on which the bridge is built, in 1780, 14 ships were burned and sank on the Brewer shore where we now stand. The very construction company when digging for the piers found three cannons from the same ship burned deep in the mud. For about 125 years the ferry operated between the two cities Bangor and Brewer. In the early years, it was a rowboat in the later years a steamboat called the [Bonton]. The ferry charge was one cent during the day and five cents at night. Even 50 years ago we suffered hardships in travel between Bangor and Brewer, long rafts of lumber and logs filled the river so that at times it was almost impossible to pass. Ships from all over the world loaded lumber and ice would cause delay. Our biggest hazard was the loss of the old covered bridge rail bridge in 1902, this required that all freight had to detour by way of Old Town. Then a new era was born, the automobile, and in recent years has caused every bigger hardship

and traffic jams. It was only in November 1954 that the bridge we are now dedicating today was made possible for the traffic to pass swiftly and safely between the two-sister cities Bangor and Brewer which makes me very happy. Thankyou.

Norbert: Thank you Loren. I suppose it's good for us to think in terms of football today particularly in anticipation of the annual Bangor Brewer game this afternoon. But we might find a little corollary in that the ball was put in play originally in Augusta by Loren Thompson. A stalwart of his day and still a stalwart here in Brewer. But it took a little swift maneuvering, a swivel hipped half back, a real ball carrier in the person of a former state representative to introduce to the legislature in 1951 the bill that eventually became a reality in the bridge that is being dedicated today. It is therefore a privilege for all of us to hear from that half back Senator Elect Allan Woodcock.

Woodcock: Mr. Dowd, Governor Cross, Mrs. Cross, honored guests and friends. I too am delighted to be here and to speak to you this morning and to participate in the dedication of this beautiful sign our progress. It is a prime example of what can be accomplished when groups in two cities work together in harmony toward one goal. It is a fine example and heralds many progressive steps to be made in Eastern and Northern Maine in my opinion. Before I conclude my very brief remarks, I must tell you a story. It's about a happy little boy here in Brewer age about five years, time about one year ago. It seems that this youngster was in Bangor with his mother and just prior to returning over, the old bridge of course, he looked up at his mother and said "Mummy is this the only bridge between Bangor and Brewer which automobiles can travel". And she looked down at him and said, "Why yes dear it is". Well he was silent for a moment and then looked up at her and said "Well mother if sometime while you and I were in Bangor about to come back to Brewer and something happened to the bridge such as its tumbling down, how on earth mother would we ever get back into the United States.". So that boy was really proud of his country and of his city each a fine thing indeed. So on behalf of everybody the happy hats and of the little boy who can now get back easily into the United States, I want to thank you very much.

Dowd: That was splendid Alan but I don't know how we in Bangor are going to live down that United States angle. The first construction on the new bridge was started on May 12<sup>th</sup> in 1952. We had then a new Governor of Maine and it was his privilege I believe to give the go-ahead signal on this bridge. We are fortunate and happy also to have that same chief executive here to present to you the greetings of the state and to talk to you on this memorable occasion. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to present to you his Excellency Governor Burton M. Cross.

Cross: Distinguished fellow citizens of Maine. I realize as you do, by the way I was only checking the time there I just didn't want to exceed the amount that we have and it's just seven minutes so you don't need to worry fellow citizens it isn't going to be beyond that time. This is a privilege to me to be here as your governor and to cut the ribbon which will open the third great bridge that we have had here in the state of Maine in just these last two or three years. It was my privilege to cut that opening ribbon at Augusta, recently at Portland, and again here today. And each one of those and the many that we have built before that are a symbol and a milestone of progress for transportation here in the state of Maine. Your friend Loren Sandman... ah, Loren Thompson has just told you of the old methods of

transportation, the only ones that we had, the only link the transportation of ships and we had the transportation of trains. Now it is almost a must that we have these bridges and roads to have the modern transportation of automobiles. Now here just a few miles away we have the more modern methods the jet age and soon we will have the atomic age but never the less at the moment we must have these links between the major cities such as this one here. Now it is something for us to look back on that these things that have been done in the past years in linking together the communities at [Woolrich] and Bath community at Augusta at Portland at Bucksport all of these great bridges, which have been built, and which are symbols of man's ambition to better themselves. Now this is not a one-man show this Bridge is the result of the teamwork of many hands the dreams of many people. Just as everything we do, here in the state of Maine are the culmination of efforts of hundreds and thousands of people. That is as it should be for we the people are the supreme ones in this state. As I dedicated the Augusta Bridge and the [Fallriver] Bridge and as I will dedicate this one. I said I dedicate these bridge... this bridge to John Q. Public the man and the woman who has dreamed, has built, and will pay for this structure. So those are the words that I will use in a few moments as we open one more link in highway transportation here in the state of Maine. If you will recall just a few weeks ago or perhaps a few months ago I told you here in Bangor that we would see great things in the next two or three years in highway transportation in the state of Maine. I prophesied to you and I reaffirm that as you will see and extension of the turnpike from Augusta to Bangor within the next three or four years. You have read about the words of your President Eisenhower, great President a man with vision. When he says we must have a continued progress in highway transportation, we must have modern links in between the states and the cities of the forty-eight. So he will present to the next congress as I assured you last summer a forward looking program of interstate roads and bridges that will bring Maine all that much closer to all the New England states the Atlantic states and all the forty-eight. It is a necessity and those things that are necessities will come to pass regardless of the cost, the pressure of the need is what guides us in legislature and congress. And so those things will be that we have foreseen and many many others for this is not a stagnant state it is a state of great possibilities a state of tremendous resources and the greatest of those are you the people of Maine. For it is your vision which will continue to show progress here in this state of ours. I was tremendously impressed, as I know you were to hear the prayer of the Reverend Dartnell your minister here in Brewer when he told those things those truths we are all familiar with, those truths of the material things. The material things that this bridge consists of the bricks and the mortar and the stone and the steel. But it would not be possible if we did not have those men which we honor here today those men who have given all that it is possible for us to enjoy freedom and peace and prosperity in these United States. It is those men that we honor here today, it is those men that we should dedicate this bridge too and that I will as I say John Q. Public for they were the members of the public that gave those last drops of blood to preserve this state of ours. This freedom that we enjoy and perhaps that think too little about. Freedom of speech, freedom to choose your candidate, freedom to do those things that we enjoy as people. Freedom for those boys and girls that stand here today that they may have the things that we the older generation perhaps did not have. So those are the symbols of a progressive state, those are the symbol of the men who fought and died to preserve it, and so we have here today a parade. There are many parades many men and many women will not see those in the material but I can be sure and you can be sure that they are there with us in the spiritual and will look down upon us and say that Maine the state that they fought for is going forward

to a better destiny because of them. So for now I believe it is my time to do those things which symbolize progress in highway transportation here in Maine. So I will now as Governor of Maine and in behalf of you the citizens yes in behalf of John Q. Public and Mrs. John Q. Public and in behalf of those men and women who have made this possible I shall take a great deal of pleasure in making it three great bridges that I have personally participated in opening.

[transcript ends]

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Fogler Special Collections  
5729 Raymond H. Fogler Library  
Orono, ME 04469-5729  
207.581.1686  
um.library.spc @ maine.edu